

Silicon Times Report
"The Original Independent Online Magazine"
(Since 1987 - Our 11th Year)

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The Publisher, Staff & Editors

Florida Lotto - LottoMan v1.35

Results: 02/21/98: three of six numbers with no matches

From the Editor's Desk...

Its that time again. This week, between the beastly storms that have coming through the area like tin soldiers, we're going try to BBQ a Leg-O-Lamb. Weather permitting.

In the meantime, the governors from most every state in the union are teaming up to cash in on the Internet by taxing our every move. Bunk, if you've never written to your Congress Critter, now is the time!! Send in that letter of protest about the greedy actions of the nation's governors and let your Congress Critter hear all about it. Else, your cost to not only acquire goodies on the 'net will go up, so will your access rates and excise taxes.

We have our mail call flag up again as we've received some good ones and answered them too. Enjoy and to all, thanks for reading.

Ralph....

Of Special Note:

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STReport is now ready to offer much more in the way of serving the Networks, Online Services and Internet's vast, fast growing site list and

userbase. We now have our very own WEB, FTP and NewsGroup Sites, do stop by and have a look see. Since We've received numerous requests to receive STReport from a wide variety of Internet addressees, we were compelled to put together an Internet distribution mailing list for those who wished to receive STReport on a regular basis, the file is ZIPPED, then UUENCODED. Unfortunately, we've also received a number of opinions that the UUENCODING was a real pain to deal with. You'll be pleased to know you are able to download STReport directly from our very own FTP SERVER or WEB Site. While there, be sure to join our STR AutoMailer list which allows a choice of either ASCII or Acrobat PDF.

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COMPUTER SCIENCES REJECTS COMPUTER ASSOCIATES' OFFER

The board of Computer Sciences Corp. has unanimously rejected a \$9.18 billion takeover bid by Computer Associates International, saying the bid didn't represent "fair value" and made no "business sense." In a strongly worded letter, Computer Sciences Chairman Van Honeycutt urged Computer Associates Chairman Charles Wang to "withdraw your offer immediately and move on," adding that otherwise Computer Sciences "will utilize every legal means necessary to defeat your attempt and will hold you and your company responsible for any damages we sustain." Computer Sciences has maintained that its ability to recommend computer products from any company has been critical to its success, and that that ability would be curtailed if it were acquired by CA. (Wall Street Journal 20 Feb 98)

U.S. NEWS GRAD SCHOOL RANKINGS AVAILABLE ONLINE

U.S. News Online has launched the online version of the well-known Graduate School Rankings issue of U.S. News & World Report; it is available at the Web site <http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/beyond/bcrank.htm>. Unlike the print version, the online version allows for complete sorting and ranking based on various criteria -- such as those schools within 50 miles of your home. (URLwire Web Site News 20 Feb 98)

The Federal Communications Commission is struggling to decide whether Internet service providers (ISPs) should be classified as telecommunications companies or simply as information providers. The 1996 Telecommunications Act defines "telecommunications" as interstate access to voice service, a function that Internet service providers perform when users take advantage of Internet telephony technology. "Why should the FCC draw regulatory distinctions when the customer is receiving the same functional service, whether it's between phones or computer and phone?" says FCC Chairman William Kennard. Internet service providers are fighting the switch from information provider to telecommunications company because being classified as a telecom carrier would mean that ISPs would have to pay into the Universal Service Fund. (TechWeb 20 Feb 98)

MCI AND AOL RECEIVE SUBPOENAS
IN MICROSOFT ANTITRUST CASE

The U.S. Department of Justice has served civil subpoenas on MCI, America Online, and other Internet service providers in an attempt to determine whether the companies agreed with Microsoft to favor that company's Web browser (Internet Explorer) over the one offered by Netscape (Netscape Navigator). The Justice Department is claiming that Microsoft is trying to leverage its domination of the operating system market into domination of the market for Internet software. (San Jose Mercury News 20 Feb 98)

WEB RANKINGS FOR SALE

Internet entrepreneur Bill Gross is funding a new venture called Go.To.Com, which offers a radical new approach to Web search services. Traditional search engines, such as Yahoo! and Lycos, have been criticized because too much of the material they deliver is irrelevant to the original search request. Go.To.Com's strategy to responding to queries is based on the idea of ranking the list in order of advertising dollars received, so that if someone searches on the word "flowers," for instance, the floral service that paid the most would be listed first. Gross points out that the same strategy is used in the Yellow Pages, where companies that pay the most for the largest ads get the prominent positions. "It's a stockmarket for attention," says Gross. "I think it's going to change the marketplace forever." (Wall Street Journal 20 Feb 98)

LAPTOPS REQUIRED OF INCOMING FRESHMEN

Freshmen entering the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2000 will be required to have laptop computers. Students can either bring their own laptop (if it meets proper specifications) or buy the machines themselves through Student Stores on campus. The university will offer low-interest, four-year loans for students who wish to finance the purchase, and will increase its financial aid budget to provide needy students with additional grant assistance to help cover the cost of the laptops. Some of the other institutions that require or will soon require students to have laptop computers are Georgia Tech, Wake Forest, Carnegie Mellon, Virginia Tech, and Western Carolina University.
<http://www.unc.edu/news/newserv/univ/elaptop.html>

NAKED UNIVERSE

The magazine Sky & Telescope says that the use of filtering software programs has prevented some schools from accessing Sky Online (<http://www.skypub.com>) because of the site's use of the word "naked," as in the expression "the naked eye." (Sky & Telescope Mar 98)

MUCH MORE INTERESTING THAN IT SOUNDS

We enjoyed this reference to Edupage, which we ran across in a book called "The Book Lover's Guide To The Internet": "Edupage describes itself as 'a summary of news about information technology,' but it's much more interesting than it sounds... The same folks also produce Educom Review, a bimonthly print magazine on learning, communications and information technology." (Evan Morris, "The Book Lover's Guide To The Internet," Fawcett Columbine Press)

COMPUTER SCIENCES SUES TO BLOCK HOSTILE TAKEOVER

Computer Sciences, the computer services company threatened with a hostile takeover by Computer Associates, which specializes in producing business software for large corporations, has begun a lawsuit charging that CA chairman Charles B. Wang tried to buy the loyalty of CS chief executive Van B. Honeycutt by personally offering him \$50 million in stock options and salary. Honeycutt rejected the offer. (AP 24 Feb 98)

AID SOUGHT FOR DISTANCE LEARNING STUDENTS

Acknowledging that "currently, we treat distance learners sort of as stepstudents," Department of Education assistant secretary David Longanecker says a proposal in President Clinton's recommendations for the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act would change that. The proposal would give financial aid eligibility to students who attend degree-granting institutions that educate students primarily through distance learning; broaden the financial aid package given to students who take distance learning courses at a traditional institution of higher education; and establish a \$30-million pilot program to help institutions develop and use innovative technology. (USA Today 24 Feb 98)

INTERNET MORPHING INTO BROADCAST MEDIUM

Media businesses are viewing the Internet as their next great broadcast medium, with companies such as Walt Disney and NBC making plans to offer video and multicasting entertainment services in the next few months. Radio stations have already staked their claims with more than 1,100 stations broadcasting 24 hours a day over the Internet. UUNet, a major Internet service provider, offers a UUCast service, using a separate set of routers from those that handle its mainstream Internet traffic. "Deploying a parallel, multicast infrastructure is a capital-intensive solution, but it works," says UUNet's VP of marketing. "The Internet becomes really interesting when you can do something you can't do any other way," says UUNet's manager of Web products. "Iceland Radio broadcasts a radio feed for people from Iceland who live in the United States and the Internet is the only way you can get it." (InternetWeek 23 Feb 98)

AAP DEVELOPS DIGITAL I.D. SYSTEM FOR PUBLICATIONS

The Association of American Publishers, in conjunction with the Corporation for National Research Initiatives, has developed an electronic identification system for materials on the Internet. The digital object identifier (DOI) system links would-be content-users with content copyright-owners through alphanumeric "tags" attached to each work. The AAP hopes the system could eventually be used to restrict access to copyrighted works, but for now, it's strictly an honor system. The DOI system will be maintained and administered by the newly formed International DOI Foundation. <http://www.doi.org> (CIO 15 Feb 98)

THE GREAT PHONE NUMBER SHORTAGE HOAX

The phone industry has argued for the past couple of years that the proliferation of fax machines and data lines has used up the available supply of phone numbers, forcing them to subdivide area code regions into smaller and smaller parcels. But critics are charging that the telephone industry has created an artificial shortage of phone numbers, costing businesses and consumers millions of dollars in the process. The problem lies in antiquated central office switching equipment, combined with the growing number of new service providers, each of which are granted phone numbers in blocks of 10,000 in each area code. Many of these numbers go unused, and regulators say the phone companies could remedy the problem by installing more sophisticated switches. Over the past three years, the number of area codes in the U.S. has surged by 67%. (St. Petersburg Times 23 Feb 98)

A COMPUTER IN EVERY GARAGE

PC makers are targeting the automobile market, with Clarion Corp. planning to be the first to offer a PC as a replacement for the factory-installed radio. The device will use Microsoft's Auto PC software, which runs on the Windows CE operating system and includes voice-recognition technology. Microsoft and Intel are working with Ford Motor Co.'s Visteon unit to develop a car PC, called ICES, which will be offered as a dealer-installed option in California and other states this summer. And General Motors' Delphi Delco Electronics unit is working on a 1999 Saab complete with on-board PC based on Microsoft software. "The amount of software in a vehicle is increasing by 20% to 30% a year," says the director of advanced engineering at Delphi Delco. Meanwhile, Sun Microsystems is working on a PC that uses Java software to link all of a car's computer system, from braking to airbags to dashboard meters. (Wall Street Journal 23 Feb 98)

IBM TARGETS HOSPITALS WITH LATEST SOFTWARE OFFERING

IBM's new Health Data Network Express will provide hospitals and healthcare providers with a series of software packages designed to assist them in making better use of the Internet in clinical document processing and physician practice administration. The company previously had tried to market a full-service system, but found customers preferred to buy individual modules and add to them over time. (Wall Street Journal 23 Feb 98)

ONLINE COURSES NEED TO LOOK GOOD TO BE GOOD

Researchers at the University of British Columbia have concluded that to be effective, the appearance of an online course is as important as the content. "We paid attention to the feeling and tone of the course, not just the content and teaching processes," says one of the researchers. "It's like going into the supermarket -- the food might look all right, but the music drives you crazy, so you leave." The study, "Best- and Worst-Dressed Web Courses: Strutting into the 21st Century in Comfort and Style," includes a "Madonna Award for Best-Dressed Course," which was granted to an American history course at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. The researchers evaluated 127 courses using 43 criteria. <http://www.usq.edu.au/dec/decjourn/demain.htm> (Chronicle of Higher Education 27 Feb 98)

YOU CAN USE A LAPTOP, YOU CAN USE A DESKTOP

Georgia Tech's computer requirement for freshmen was stated incorrectly in the announcement cited in our last issue, which said that Tech requires students to own laptops; Georgia Tech has corrected the report, saying it permits students to choose either laptop OR desktop machines. (Our own guess, though it's just a guess, is that Georgia Tech policy allows students to bring laptops to class but not desktops.)

GOVERNORS WANT TO TAX INTERNET;
CLINTON URGES MORATORIUM

Because he believes the Internet is spurring the growth of new industries and helping create a new economy based on high technology, President Clinton is opposing the National Governors' Association's call to Congress to enact legislation for a uniform system to collect state taxes on sales conducted via Internet. The Governors say that without such legislation the states will increasingly be deprived of a valuable source of revenue, but Clinton supports a moratorium on taxing Internet commerce, to allow for long-term discussion of the issues. (New York Times 26 Feb 98)

MAJOR PHONE OUTAGE

A severed cable in Illinois owned by Illuminet, a company that provides signaling and other services to phone company networks, caused several hours of disrupted service for customers of AT&T, Teleport, and Bell Atlantic's mobile phone division. Phone problems in New York City were widespread, and a switchboard operator of that city's Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center said: "It's chaos, total chaos. We've had at least 400 calls already from inside the hospital trying to call out." (San Jose Mercury News 26 Feb 98)

HACKERS PLAGUE PENTAGON MACHINES

The FBI is investigating a "fairly heavy" series of attempted break-ins on unclassified military computer networks over the past couple of weeks. The hackers entered the networks and placed "trap doors" in them, enabling information to be retrieved later. "It was widespread, and it was modestly sophisticated," says the Pentagon's No. 2 official. Security experts have termed the recent attacks "ankle-biters" -- more of a nuisance than a serious threat to national security. Fifty-three percent of federal government computer security managers reported unauthorized use of their systems last year, and "This year, the number is more like 60%," says a Computer Security Institute analyst. (Wall Street Journal 26 Feb 98)

PIRACY DETECTOR

Researchers at Cambridge University in England have built a prototype of a device that automatically sniffs out illegal software. The mobile electronic surveillance system detects and decodes otherwise-inaudible radio signals emitted by a PC that are used to report licensing violations of specially designed software. The PC piracy scanner is modeled on similar technology used by spies to eavesdrop on computer and telephone communications. A similar device is used in Great Britain to identify scofflaws who haven't paid the annual fees required of TV set owners. (Information Week 16 Feb 98)

TECHNOLOGY SPENDING RANKS NO. 1 AMONG CFOs

A survey of 1,400 chief financial officers, conducted by Robert Half International, indicates that technology enhancement is the top area for company investment in 1998. Marketing and facilities expansion ranked

second and third. (Investor's Business Daily 25 Feb 98)

RESEARCHERS ANNOUNCE BREAKTHROUGH IN CHIP TECHNOLOGY

Researchers at the University of Texas at Austin say they were able to print circuits with dimensions as small as 0.08 microns, using a slightly amended version of conventional optical lithography chip-making technology. The new circuits would be about one-third the size of chips on the market today: "It's a 'Wow!' of a technology," says the director of lithography sciences at the Semiconductor Research Council. "There were six alternatives and we were expecting each to take years of research and more than \$1 billion to commercialize." (Wall Street Journal 26 Feb 98)

INTERNET GROWTH SQUEEZING ISPS

With demand for bandwidth increasing exponentially, and stiff competition holding down prices, Internet service providers are trying to figure out how to foot the bill for new equipment and more leased bandwidth to satisfy customers' requirements. UUnet CEO John Sidgemore says no technology in history has grown as fast as the Internet: "Internet bandwidth demand is expanding by 10 times each year. This is presenting a scaling challenge that we've never found before." In response, ISPs are considering using data storage devices to cache copies of large, frequently accessed files within their own networks. Another option is increased "peering," which would allow traffic from one ISP to pass directly to customers of another provider without going through the main Internet gateways, where most of the congestion occurs. (TechWeb 25 Feb 98)

RETAILERS READY SHELVES FOR NEW MODEMS

Retailers this week are clearing their shelves of the old 56Kbps modems in anticipation of the arrival of new V.90-standard-compatible 56Kbps devices. The shipments are expected to arrive sometime this week. Modem makers warn that Internet service providers will require up to six months to put the new standard in place. AT&T WorldNet, which was the only top 10 ISP not to opt for either of the interim 56K technologies, is now positioned to move quickly to accommodate 56K customers. (Computer Reseller News 25 Feb 98)

FED CHAIRMAN CONCERNED ABOUT YEAR 2000 PROBLEM

Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan says that the problem (caused by the inability of old software to know what century it's in, because space-saving programmers allocated only two digits for the "year" field) is already hurting the economy. And he's worried about even greater damage ahead: "Inevitable difficulties are going to emerge," which could lead to "a very large problem." Greenspan says the Fed will be ready to lend banks tens of billions of dollars to deal with that problem, if necessary. (USA Today 26 Feb 98)

GATES CHECKS OUT LIBRARY CONNECTIONS

This week Microsoft chief Bill Gates visited Alabama, the first statewide partner of the Gates Library Foundation whose mission is to ensure that all citizens get a fair share of Internet time. Gates says: "We don't want just the most privileged people to have the access, we want everyone to have access." Alabama received a \$2.7 million grant from the Foundation; states to receive funding in the next round of grants are Louisiana, Mississippi, Kentucky, Arkansas, New Mexico, and West Virginia. (AP 25 Feb 98)

OFFICE TALK

Version 1.51 Overview

Research conducted during the last year indicated that OfficeTalk users required a link between OfficeTalk and their word processor, their two most frequently used pieces of software. Our recent upgrade, OfficeTalk V1.51, launched in September this year, includes several additions designed to provide such a link, enhanced Internet mail capabilities and a number of improvements to increase the effectiveness of OfficeTalk in countries outside of the United Kingdom.

" ... useful enhancements make OfficeTalk 1.5 a powerful contact management tool ... It's one of the most impressive workgroup tools around."

PC Magazine, July 1996

Enhanced Contact Management

OfficeTalk V1.51 now allows you to link to any major word processor to create documents and archive them against companies and contacts already held in OfficeTalk's central database. Users can create an unlimited number of document templates which can be personal to an individual user or available to the whole workgroup. Users can specify the information they wish to extract from OfficeTalk and then place in their document.

New Document Archiving

OfficeTalk will create a record under the Contact for each new document. Once the document has been printed and saved, OfficeTalk will archive the document against the contact record as an attachment. Any user wishing to view the document simply double clicks on the document icon and OfficeTalk will launch the appropriate word processor and document.

Mail Merge

As well as creating single documents, users can create mail-merges directly from OfficeTalk's Contact Manager. Once an OfficeTalk Contact group has been selected, OfficeTalk will create a record under each Contact and generate the mail-merge file within the appropriate word processor ready for printing. Each contact record is linked to a single copy of the document.

New fax server links

You can use the OfficeTalk Contact Manager as the one workgroup-wide address book for conventional mail, E-Mail and faxes. OfficeTalk 1.51 comes complete with the macros required to link OfficeTalk document templates to GFI FAXmaker fax server. Macros are supplied for use with Microsoft Word 6 and 7, Corel WordPerfect 6 and 7 and Lotus AmiPro 3.1 and WordPro. Whilst we do not currently support any other fax servers, you may use the macros as a basis for linking with any other fax server that supports DDE.

Workgroup-wide Internet mail

OfficeTalk 1.51 provides even closer integration with the Workgroup Internet Gateway, enabling users to send and receive Internet mail from OfficeTalk's Mail mode.

International Features

Contact field names can be customised to suit the standards operating in a particular market. Files shipped with OfficeTalk are designed for the UK, North American, Danish and Australasian markets. In addition, the UK and North American markets also include pull down lists for Counties and States respectively. OfficeTalk takes date and time formats from the Windows setup information.

FAXmaker Overview

OfficeTalk & FAXmaker for Networks 5

A network fax solution allows you to send faxes directly from your applications such as OfficeTalk, at laser printer quality and in one tenth of the time it takes to send a fax manually. This is the case irrespective of whether you are sending to one recipient, or a thousand.

FAXmaker offers you a network fax solution specifically designed to integrate with today's applications, E-Mail systems and networks. FAXmaker can run on any network. A dedicated fax server is not required but may be advisable depending on traffic. NT users will not require a dedicated server for FAXmaker as FAXmaker may be installed directly on NT server. Standard fax modems can be used and the fax server can be expanded simply, at any time, to support up to 32 fax lines and 250 users simultaneously.

Installation of FAXmaker is straight-forward. Integration with OfficeTalk 1.51 is fast and seamless and the combination provides significant additional functionality for OfficeTalk users. For example, document templates can be customised, with data held in OfficeTalk's central address book being drawn into Word, Ami Pro or WordPerfect before being automatically transferred into FAXmaker and transmitted.

OfficeTalk can be used to create standard, workgroup-wide fax documentation, avoiding inconsistencies in image and presentation and reducing the time spent searching through directories for spuriously named documents. Once created, OfficeTalk automatically fills in the relevant fields of the documentation. Faxes are sharper and crisper than when sent by conventional fax machines and stationery costs are reduced by the avoidance of paper. OfficeTalk automatically tracks and records all faxes transmitted by Contact, Company and the User who sent it.

The benefits of FAXmaker

- You no longer need to print out your document before faxing.
- FAXmaker will automatically retry fax numbers if they are busy.
- Faxes are more legible and of a better quality.
- Incoming faxes can be automatically and immediately routed to you upon receipt.
- Only you and your system administrator can view your outgoing and

incoming faxes. Easy to send faxes to groups of people.

WIG - The Workgroup Internet Gateway

WIG Version 3.0 sends and receives Internet mail seamlessly from MS Outlook, MS Exchange Client or OfficeTalk 1.51 on a network via a single modem or ISDN line attached to any NT 4.0 or Windows 95 PC. It comes with additional components which also allow Windows 3.11 MS Mail users to send and receive Internet mail. Users benefit from a single mail interface for workgroup and Internet mail, a single folder structure for all mail and, in the case of OfficeTalk users, a single workgroup-wide address book for both conventional and Internet addresses accessible in OfficeTalk's Mail Mode. The organisation benefits from easy central administration and a single Internet connection without investment in MS Exchange Server, separate mail servers or Internet gateways.

WIG Version 3.0 specification includes:

- Full NT 4.0 compatibility.
- Full event logging plus monitor window showing all activities as they occur.
- Pending message status.
- Auto responder features.
- Advanced mail forwarding.
- Connection scheduling including day, time and number of pending messages options.
- Enhanced performance and improved large attachment handling.
- Automatic Finger protocol for SMTP hosts.
- Multi-user POP3 account support.
- WIG is able to encode and decode attachments in either MIME or UUENCODE formats and receives incoming mail using either POP3 or SMTP.

WIG is available for £29.00 or \$43.50 (plus taxes) per user. Prices reduce for larger installations. A 250 user system is less than £8.00 or \$12.00 per user. WIG is made available to OfficeTalk users at no extra charge.

WIG enhances the acclaimed OfficeTalk

OfficeTalk has received universal acclaim and many awards as the easiest to use, most comprehensive workgroup information manager. Its well thought out interface, breadth of functionality and robust performance have established it in workgroups within organisations including ABB, ASDA, BNFL, BTR, Brother, Cazanove, CompuServe, DEC, GEC, Hewlett Packard, ICL, Informix and KPMG.

Just two of the unique features that have helped ensure OfficeTalk's success include a single central workgroup address book with comprehensive contact management facilities, and the group view, which allows any teams' diaries to be viewed simultaneously. OfficeTalk Version 1.51 has brought document templating and automatic document creation and archiving to the workgroup, further confirming OfficeTalk's superiority.

The introduction of WIG adds a further important dimension to OfficeTalk's functionality by providing users with an Intranet facility, with the ability to send and receive E-Mail and attachments between separate OfficeTalk workgroups.

OfficeTalk Technical Specification

Overview

OfficeTalk is a Microsoft Windows on-line transaction processing solution for workgroup computing. It is written in Microsoft Visual C++ and utilises Microsoft Foundation Classes. It requires MS Windows 3.1x or greater clients.

It provides a Central Workgroup Data Structure which uses Btrieve as its underlying record manager and will run across any network that provides access to a shared DOS directory.

OfficeTalk Client

OfficeTalk has a 16 bit client that runs on Windows 3.1, 3.11, 95 and NT. The OfficeTalk executable is 2.5Mb. A full installation with associated files (Help, etc.) but excluding data, will take up well under 3.5Mb. Running under Windows 3.11, OfficeTalk will typically use between 7% and 9% of Windows system resources.

Underlying Database

OfficeTalk is supplied with the Btrieve Version 5.1 Client and can be run with the Btrieve Version 6 Client or Btrieve Version 5 or 6 Client/Server. Sareen Software have not found any significant performance advantages when running Btrieve Client/Server.

Scalability

Provided that the network is fast enough and has sufficient available band width, there is no specific limit to the size of an OfficeTalk workgroup. A realistic maximum is in the region of 500 to 600 users. The largest installation to date has a workgroup of 300 users. As a measure of performance, users in this workgroup access any other colleague's diary in under 5 seconds.

ODBC Data Access

ODBC data access is available for users of the OfficeTalk Data Access Toolkit.

Wide Area Network Support

As realistic minimum, OfficeTalk can run satisfactorily over WANs connected by Kilostream lines (256Kb per second). Initial load times are significantly improved when running over Megastream lines (1Mb per second plus).

System Requirements:

- Windows 3.1x minimum specification
- 386SX25 with 4mb RAM and 10mb swap file running Windows 3.1
- Windows 3.1x recommended minimum specification
- 486SX25 with 8mb RAM and 10mb swap file running Windows 3.11
- Windows 95 minimum specification

- o 486SX25 with 8mb RAM
- o Windows 95 recommended minimum specification
- o 486DX2/66 with 16mb RAM
- o Windows NT minimum specification
- o 486DX2/66 with 16mb RAM
- o Windows NT recommended minimum specification
- o Pentium P120 with 24mb RAM
- o Installation Recommendations
- o Peer to Peer and slow networks;
- o Install the executable on the local machine to reduce network traffic and load times.
- o Server-based networks;
- o Run the executable from the server to make upgrades easier.
- o Portables used for working off-line;
- o Install the executable on the portable to reduce disconnection times.

Backgrounder

Sareen Software Plc was formed by the team behind Deepak Sareen Associates, to publish OfficeTalk, the first workgroup information manager, world-wide.

In June 1995, OfficeTalk won the Best UK Product category in the Ziff Davis European Software Excellence Awards. In the UK PC Magazine's 1995 Technical Innovation Awards OfficeTalk won the Best Office Software category and was one of just three finalists in the Network Software Category. OfficeTalk was also a Finalist in the 1996 SPA Codie Awards for the Best New Business Software Program and is a recipient of a PC Plus Value award.

Award Citations.

- o Ziff Davis European Software Excellence Awards. 1995
- o PC Magazine Technical Innovation Awards; Winner, Best Office Application. 1995
- o PC Magazine Technical Innovation Awards; Runner-up, Best Network Application. 1995
- o PC Plus VALUE AWARD, Contact Manager review. August 1996

Ziff Davis European Software Excellence Awards. 1995

"The winner of the award for BEST UK SOFTWARE was OfficeTalk, from UK software developer Sareen Software. Up until now, groupware has been dominated by the big names of the computer software industry - Lotus, ICL, IBM and Novell. OfficeTalk bravely breaks this mould by offering a highly functional groupware solution that requires very little investment in money or time to begin using it.

OfficeTalk allows small groups of end-users to make their own workgroup-based groupware solutions, without having to wait for a corporate-wide rollout.

The other finalists in the Best UK Software category were Superbase95 from Superbase, which is an excellent visual database, and CopyControl 1.65 from Microcosm, an extremely innovative multimedia development tool."

PC Magazine Technical Innovation Awards; Winner, Best Office Application. 1995

"OfficeTalk, from Sareen Software, succeeds in making groupware usable, by fully exploiting what the Windows GUI has to offer.

Described as a 'workgroup information manager', the things that make OfficeTalk different are apparent from the moment you begin the installation. The program offers diary, task management, email, project planning and general data management facilities, and yet the whole thing is installed from a single* floppy disk. Presentation is clear and detailed, with obvious icons and well-distributed toolbars that can be labelled for even better legibility.

Along with the usual views, the diary also offers a meeting mode. From here you can schedule meetings by picking resources and participants from a predefined list. OfficeTalk requests the presence of the relevant participants via the email system, giving them the chance to accept or decline by clicking the large 'Can Attend' or 'Can't Attend' buttons. Those who can't attend can even explain why with the aid of a text note.

Along with the electronic wallchart planner, OfficeTalk offers a simple, but functional, project management module. With Project Manager, you can allocate assignments to your co-workers and set deadlines, start dates, completion dates, duration and priorities for tasks. Again, other OfficeTalk users who have been assigned tasks will be informed although you can override this feature.

Central to OfficeTalk is its mail component. This is where all meeting information and task assignments are held. The mail system provides all the usual options including attachments and its unique notify option offers 'Yes/No' dialog boxes that permit the recipient to respond instantly to simple questions.

The very competitively priced OfficeTalk 1.0 is an ideal solution for the small-to-medium sized office, where large, more complex systems are neither practical nor desirable."

*OfficeTalk V1.0.

PC Magazine Technical Innovation Awards; Runner-up, Best Network Application. 1995

"One of the most amazing products we've looked at in the last year, Sareen Software's OfficeTalk does everything a small office or corporate workgroup could expect it to, and more. This group scheduler and personal information manager is easy to use, costs very little and comes on just a single* floppy disk. A rare beast indeed.

The interface is a model of usability. Its toolbar buttons sport unambiguous icons no function is more than a single mouse click away and everything is labelled. It doesn't scrimp on features either, offering diary, wallchart planner, email and more. This is an elegant, intuitive package that more than earns its keep on anyone's hard disk."

*OfficeTalk V1.0.

PC Plus VALUE AWARD, Contact Manager review. August 1996

"OfficeTalk could be used as an example of the way network software should work. It's simple and intuitive to install, links to workstation users are easy to set up and it's very difficult to get lost in the system once you've started to use it.

There are two reasons for this: Sareen Software set out to produce a Workgroup Information Manager (WIM) which was supremely easy to use, and OfficeTalk does less than Commence or GoldMine in some areas. However, for many small organisations, it does more than Organizer and needs much less

training for the people who are going to use it. It also costs just £50 per user.

After you've run the installation program on whichever machine you intend to use as the OfficeTalk server and entered names for your other users, you can download the software across the workgroup. At this stage you can choose to install it on each local workstation or run it all from the server. The program is small, taking barely two floppy disks, and runs quickly and efficiently with little overhead on the workgroup.

OfficeTalk is structured more like Lotus Organizer than either Commence or GoldMine and the main diary screen shows a scrollable appointments diary as well as a task list and calendar for the current day. You can choose to show 'In', 'Process' and 'Out' trays and a waste basket. More than this, a simple drop-down selector enables you to see the diaries for any other user on the system.

Simple button functions like 'Where', 'When' and 'Who' offer information on the location of meetings, when tasks are due for completion and which members of the workgroup are currently logged on to the system. The 'Who' function can be used to tell you when people go off-site, too, if they are conscientious about filling in details before they go.

OfficeTalk is strong on scheduling and contact management. The alphabetically tabbed address book is organised by company and is shared across the system, but each member of the group can also have a personal address book which is private and sorted by name. You can define any number of document templates, which can be exported, together with details from the contacts database, to any program which can accept ASCII or RTF files, such as MS Word.

It's a shame, though, that there's no direct connection with fax software* such as WinFax, so that address and number details could be held in one centralised file.

As with the other two programmes, you can extract a copy of your OfficeTalk database to a notebook machine for when you're away from the office. Any changes can then be reconciled automatically on your return.

E-mail can be sent and received through OfficeTalk, either as notes over a workgroup or through the Internet. As a nice touch, e-mail invitations to a meeting are sent out automatically when the meeting is set up, for all attendees to confirm they can come. External e-mail, sent through an SMTP gateway which must already be set up, is transparent in use. You simply use an Internet address as the destination. Mail can be received into an OfficeTalk client or server in the same way.

OfficeTalk really is like the proverbial breath of fresh air after using the other two programs reviewed here. Although it is restricted in its depth of contact information in comparison to GoldMine and less flexible than Commence, it makes up for all this in its ease of installation and the intuitive way in which it works. OfficeTalk is the ideal workgroup manager for the home and small business.

Both Commence and GoldMine are far too expensive. Contact management isn't that vertical or minority a market and a price of £1,000 for five users can't be justified. The only product of the three reviewed here that we would recommend is OfficeTalk, which works intelligently and doesn't require its users to understand object programming terms. You can link 20 users with OfficeTalk for the same price as five under Commence or

GoldMine. OfficeTalk gets our vote and a value for money award."

Editor's Note..

Through the course of the next few weeks, we shall be doing an in-depth review of Office Talk 1.5 and a teaser overview of Office Talk 2.0 beta.

So far, I must say this application offers what appears to be the very best in inter-office connectivity. Superb phone messaging, excellent layout and easy to use and understand prompting. The next few weeks with this baby are going to be very interesting. Stay tuned...

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Kids Computing Corner
Frank Sereno, Editor
fsereno@streport.com

The Kids' Computing Corner
Computer news and software reviews
from a parent's point of view

From Frank's Desk

I'd like to express my sympathies and condolences to those that have suffered losses due to the fury of Mother Nature in the past week. While we in the midwest have enjoyed an unbelievably mild winter, California has suffered torrential flooding and central Florida was devastated by tornadoes. Let's all donate a gift of food, money or blood plasma to the disaster relief agencies.

In lighter news, my two oldest boys are now amateur roller hockey players. They played a double header on Wednesday and managed to split the two games. Roller hockey is really a great sport. The action is fast-paced and almost non-stop. It can be a little rough, even in a non-checking league. Many kids just can't stop fast enough or turn quick enough to avoid collisions. So far, the kids have suffered no more than scrapes and bruises. The best part is that the game is great exercise and that my kids' skating has really improved. No doubt that they will be able to out-skate the old man any day now!

So due to my duties as a "hockey dad", I have been unable to complete my scheduled review this week. Now that we have established a routine, I think I'll be able to get back on track for next week. Please accept my apologies.

In the News

Reader Rabbit's 2nd Grade Arriving This Spring

The Learning Company recently announced the upcoming release of Reader Rabbit's 2nd Grade. The program will be on a hybrid-format CD-ROM for both Windows and Macintosh computers and will retail for less than \$30.

The disc will feature more than twenty activities that will hone children's essential second grade skills including reading, writing, math, science and thinking. Activities are designed to be fun and educational. Three progressive levels of difficulty make it easy for children to advance to higher skill levels. All this learning happens while the child is guiding Sam the Lion through Dragon's Castle. Solving puzzles and unraveling the mystery of the castle entice the child to come back to the game time and

again.

For more information, call 1-800-227-5609 or visit The Learning Company Web site at <http://www.learningco.com>.

CyberMedia Offers 30-Day Free Trial on Guard DogT Deluxe

If you're looking to make your Internet surfing more secure, here's an opportunity you shouldn't pass up. CyberMedia is offer a free 30-day trial of the full version of Guard DogT Deluxe. Just download the software from the company's Web site at <http://www.cybermedia.com> and install it.

Guard DogT will work in the background to protect your computer from unwanted cookies (no more unsightly crumb trails). It will also block hostile Java and ActiveX applets and protect sensitive information such as passwords, e-mail and personal data. Finally, it guards against viruses that can be transmitted via the Internet. Any threat to your computer is signified by a barking dog. So put a guard dog on your computer today.

Funk & Wagnalls Is Now Available Via the Web

The Funk & Wagnalls Knowledge Center is now available for free trial until April 15th. You can check it out at <http://www.funkandwagnalls.com>. This multimedia site will be available for a \$14.95 membership fee and it is included with the purchase of the CD-ROM and DVD versions of the Funk & Wagnall's Multimedia Encyclopedia.

The Knowledge Center has the identical interface as the Multimedia Encyclopedia. Both can be researched simultaneously with the Research Wizard. The Knowledge Center has additional options such as Reuters news, current news analysis, interactive art exhibits, a follow along music center, chat areas and a term paper help section.

If you have a 486 Windows computer or a PowerPC Macintosh with a 14.4k modem, you can visit the site and experience its multimedia delights.

Bandai Digital Entertainment to Release DigiMonT CD-ROM

If you have had your fill of Tamagotchis, and even if you haven't, Bandai brings forth the next step in virtual pets with the DigiMonT. It's a Digital MonsterT, that owners must raise, feed, train and then send into combat. These little electronic gladiators will surely win the hearts of many young boys. The battling monsters will be available for your Windows 95 PC in June for only \$19.95.

Multiple players can raise several monsters on the same computer. For the ultimate in competition, you can take your monster to battle all comers on the Internet at Bandai's DigiMon Web site. The battle's result depends on how well you train and care for your monster. So players learn a bit about pet care and training regimens while enjoying the antics of the rock'em, sock'em monsters.

CorelDRAWT 8
Corel Corporation
for Windows 95 and Windows NT 4.0
Estimated Retail Price \$419
Estimated Upgrade Price \$199

Review by Donna Lines (dlines@uti.com)

The CorelDRAWT 8 suite includes tools for illustration, painting, photo editing, 3D modeling and rendering. Corel has also included several top-notch power utilities to enhance scanning, texture creation, and color management including Kodak Digital ScienceT Color Management System. Always outdoing themselves, Corel has loaded the program with over 40,000 high-quality clipart images and symbols and 1,000 photos. Also included are 1,000 True Typer and Type 1 fonts, hundreds of 3D models, web backgrounds, animated GIFs and over 450 DrawT and Paper Direct templates. On top of all of this, Corel has included several Adobe-compatible Plug-Ins including Auto F/XT Photo/Graphic Edges, Cytopia PhotoLabT, Digimarcr Digital Watermarking, and Human Software Squizz!T that can be used with DRAWT and Photo-PaintT.

Version 8 includes several workshops that will familiarize you with the program and have you producing stunning graphics immediately. The "Cool Effects" workshops for Photo-PaintT 8 were written by well-known Photo-PaintT experts, Debbie Cook and David Huss (author of the Corel Photo-PaintT, The Official Guide series).

CorelDRAW 8 incorporates over 100 new enhancements. The user now has total control over the workspace. You can create a custom work environment with all the relevant tools needed for each type of project, enhancing your productivity. DRAWT and Photo-PaintT take advantage of new Docker windows that the user can place anywhere in the workspace. You can stack multiple Dockers with tabs for quick and easy access with reduced screen clutter. The traditional Roll-Ups are also utilized for many of the tools.

Special features include a realistic drop shadow, which is a cinch to use via the Roll-Up menu. New to DRAWT 8 is the ability to place imported objects anywhere you choose on the page, instead of the default placement at the center of the page. An exciting new feature is the ability to use the Pick Tool to select one object out of a group, even if the object is hidden beneath many other objects. Also, it is now easier to see which object you have selected with the Pick Tool, the cursor changes to an arrow-headed cross when you are over the center of the selected object.

To increase your productivity, there are extensive, fully customizable keyboard shortcuts. This includes the Recorder and Script options. Both are useful when you want to apply a series of commands to more than one object. You can use the Recorder for the current session. Use the Script option if you wish to save it for future sessions.

Version 8 includes everything you need to design a web page. You can import the included web backgrounds, objects, menus, text boxes, and buttons. You can easily convert text to HTML by selecting the "Make Text HTML Compatible" in the Text Menu.

New to Corel Photo-PaintT 8 are a streamlined Object Manager, low resolution image editing, and extensive Undo features. The Fade Last Command feature found in the Edit Menu lets you undo the last command you performed in stages, eventually undoing the command. There are several brush enhancements including the ability to instantaneously adjust the nib

size on screen. This is a great new feature and a real time saver. Set the brush type to Symmetrical at the bottom of the brush Roll-Up and you can paint symmetrically. The radial option creates nibs called "points" at various distances around the brush tool and are governed by a definable center point. The mirror option will mirror the nib at one point either horizontally or vertically. I found the Symmetrical feature useful for creating a uniform wallpaper pattern effect. Another new brush feature is Orbit, which allows you to create spiral and other types of patterns, such as dirt and DNA. Now on screen previews are available from most effects dialog boxes by checking the on screen preview option. The Clip Mask command allows you to apply a transparency over an object, allowing you to try out changes without affecting the image below.

CorelDRAW 3D 8 is a 3D modeling and rendering program based on MetaCreations (formerly known as Fractal Design) Ray Dream Designer program. The program includes hundreds of 3D objects. You can easily create 3D objects and export them as VRML to the Internet.

Intellimouse and MMX support help make CorelDRAW 8 a speedy and efficient tool that the graphic artist - from the professional web page designer, page layout artist, or photo-editor to the graphics amateur -- will appreciate. Whether you're an experienced CorelDRAW user or if you're a beginner, CorelDRAW 8 is the graphics package for you!

System Requirements: Windows 95 or NT, 16MB RAM (32MB Strongly Recommended), CD-ROM Drive, mouse or tablet, Pentium 90 (Pentium 133 processor recommended), 80MB hard drive space; and SVGA video.

Special Notice!! STR Infofile File format for Articles

File Format for STReport

All articles submitted to STReport for publication must be sent in the following format. Please use the format requested. Any files received that do not conform will not be used. The article must be in an importable word processor format for Word 6.0 and/or Word Perfect 7.. The margins are .05" left and 1.0" Monospaced fonts are not to be used. Please use proportional fonting only and at Twelve (12) points.

- No Indenting on any paragraphs!!
- No Indenting of any lines or "special gimmicks"
- No underlining!
- Columns shall be achieved through the use of tabs only. Or, columns in Word or Word Perfect format. Do NOT, under any circumstances, use the space bar.
- Most of all.. PLEASE! No ASCII "ART"!!
- There is no limits as to size, articles may be split into two if lengthy

- Actual Artwork should be in GIF, PCX, JPG, TIF, BMP, WMF file formats
- Artwork (pictures, graphs, charts, etc.) should be sent along with the article separately
- Please use a single font in an article. TTF Times New Roman 12pt. is preferred. (VERY Strong Hint)

If there are any questions please use either E-Mail or call. On another note. the ASCII version of STReport is fast approaching the "end of the line" As the major Online Services move away from ASCII.. So shall STReport. All in the name of progress and improved readability. The amount of reader mail expressing a preference for our Adobe PDF enhanced issue is running approximately 15 to 1 over the ASCII edition. I might add however, the requests for our issues to be done in HTML far outnumber both PDF and ascii. HTML is now under consideration. We'll keep you posted. Besides, STReport will not be caught in the old, worn out "downward compatibility dodge" we must move forward.

However, if the ASCII readership remains as high, rest assured. ASCII will stay. Right now, since STReport is offered on a number of closed major corporate Intranets as "required" Monday Morning reading.. Our ascii readers have nothing to worry themselves about. It looks like it is here to stay.

Many grateful thanks in advance for your enthusiastic co-operation and input.

Ralph F. Mariano, Editor
rmariano@streport.com
STReport International Online Magazine

A TRUST BETRAYED?

Reprinted for use with MailCall..

Fla. man held on porn charge after computer repair

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (Reuters) - Police have arrested a Florida man on charges of possessing child pornography after technicians repairing his home computer found material he had downloaded from the Internet, police said Wednesday. Robert Gordon Edris, 52, of Jacksonville, had left his personal computer for a hardware upgrade, said Jeff Hall, a technician at Computer Renaissance, the independent computer store that contacted police.

Hall said an image of children having sex came onto the screen when the computer was turned on. "We respect our customers' privacy, but in this case it just happened to pop up," Hall said.

Store employees called police, who asked them to tell Edris his computer was ready to pick up. When Edris arrived, detectives asked him to sign a consent waiver so they could search his computer files and then arrested him when they found the allegedly illegal material, a spokesman for the Jacksonville Police Department said.

Geoff Smith, a Washington attorney with the Blue Ribbon Campaign for Internet Free Speech, said arrests like Edris's were rare but should remind people that personal computers were not as secure as many assumed.

"...Computer technicians could just as easily investigate your financial portfolio or proprietary information if you keep it on your hard drive. You have to be careful," Smith said.

An opinion

By Ralph F. Mariano

Can you believe this nonsense??? What would happen to a lawyer or a Doctor or, any other professional with whom people entrusted their innermost secrets?? You and I both know the answer. They'd soon lose their license to practice. Please read the above very carefully.. It is, in itself, a contradiction. The "technician", Jeff Hall says the porn just "popped up". But the cop had to ask permission to "search the hard drive" to "find" the porn in question!

I'd like to hear from you on this one.. How many agree. the "technician" entrusted with the computer had no business prying into the personal data on the drive. His responsibility and duty was to effect the repair or upgrade not search through the hard drive. Or, do you feel the "technician" was acting entirely within the scope of his responsibilities?

My opinion is; "the tech was way, way outta line." He had no business looking through that customer's drive or any other computer or hard drive entrusted to his care. Further, if he had to look it was immediately incumbent upon him to adhere to the trust he, directly or indirectly, assumed when he accepted the assignment to work on that computer. Additionally, since he did look over and/or discover whatever. he had no right "blowing the whistle". His actions reek of "Big Brother" snoop tactics or, worse yet. of Germany's Gestapo encouragement of neighbor snitch on neighbor. His actions in my humble opinion were ghastly. Being a computer professional myself. I find many different computers, from professionals, Attorneys, Doctors etc., entrusted in my care. That trust being an "implied trust" I dare not betray. I feel personally violated by this young man's actions. Obviously, he is either inexperienced or, has a great deal to learn.

As an aside, I am personally acquainted with the owner of the branch store where the young man is employed along with a number of good folks who work in another branch store owned by the same party here in town. I find it hard to fathom that the owner of these two stores would have gone along with such a repulsive action. I am especially convinced after having been told by a number of other employees."they had received a large volume of comments and complaints, both pro and con, relative to the young man's actions. Let us hear from you! What's your opinion on this matter?

STR Editor's Mail Call "...a place for the readers to be heard"

Editor's MailBag

Messages * NOT EDITED * for content

From: Stan Sieger [sieger@hotmail.com]

Sent: Sunday, February 22, 1998 2:58 AM

To: rmariano@streport.com

Subject: Re your editorial

>> First, a computer technician is not a "professional" like a doctor, lawyer, or even, priest.

He's more like a car mechanic who doesn't have to worry about getting his fingernails dirty ;-)

Since when did either take a vow of silence? If a car mechanic came across a loaded gun in a car shouldn't he call the cops first and worry about whether the owner had a valid license second?

Maybe the owner of the computer in question uses the same program as I do, one that changes the desktop wallpaper on each bootup. If he was stupid enough to use child porno as one wallpaper image that would explain why the computer technician saw it WITHOUT "prying" but the cops needed permission to "explore" the hardware.

I thought possession of that stuff was a felony. Isn't it the duty of a citizen to report the commission of felonies to the police? Seems that's what the tech did. <<

From: Ralph F. Mariano [rmariano@streport.com]

Sent: Sunday, February 22, 1998 9:06 AM

To: Stan Sieger

Subject: RE: Re your editorial

Stan,

I'm a Computer Professional.. I consult, I build custom units and systems, I design LANs and WANs for a living. In the course of my business.... I come across many things stored on hard drives very sensitive material and I know I must abide by an implied trust much the same as a Lawyer, Doctor and others with whom private citizens entrust their inner most secrets. Certain Lawyer accounts we have that I service have hard disks full of client interviews and confidential information that "cops" wold love to have so they could do "their thing."

In this country (USA) you are innocent until proven guilty you are not obliged to prove your innocence. You try to use the weapon, loaded or otherwise, found in a car by a mechanic. That's not a good object to use since the finding of it constitutes no crime in most states. Further, a cop must have "just cause" to use the weapon as such. Now, in the matter of porno pics you seem to immedately take the stance that this guy had some sort of graphical booter running that flipped desktops or bootup pics. I don't know that he did or didn't.

I'd like to emphasize that I am very familiar with both the Computer Stores mentioned and their owner. Further I intend upon attending the proceedings in this matter and perhaps testifying. You see, if this sort of thing is allowed to occur at will... nothing will be sacred. Not the sanctity and privacy of your home, computer or perhaps one day, your inner-most thoughts. We as a society must never allow ourselves to be cast in the role of mindless, rules following 'droids. For when that does happen we shall indeed lose our humanity.

Thanks for reading....

- Ralph F. Mariano, Editor, Publisher
- STReport International Magazine
- SBN 3 - MSDN - 192535/1687
- <http://www.streport.com> - rmariano@streport.com

IE4, When only.. The Very Finest Will Do!

From: Ralph F. Mariano [rmariano@streport.com]
Sent: Monday, February 23, 1998 7:47 AM
To: Stan Sieger
Subject: RE: Re your editorial

> -----Original Message-----
> From: Stan Sieger [mailto:sieger@hotmail.com]
> Sent: Sunday, February 22, 1998 4:45 PM
> To: rmariano@streport.com
> Subject: RE: Re your editorial

>> must have "just cause" to use the weapon as such. Now, in the matter of porno pics you seem to immediately take the stance that this guy had some sort of graphical booter running that flipped desktops or bootup pics. I don't know that he did or didn't. You claimed that the only way that the tech could know that there was kiddie porn on the guy's computer was by "prying." I am only pointing out that he could have come across this info purely innocently. Having found it he is obliged to report it to the cops. If you found that one of your lawyer clients was laundering money for the drug cartels would you just ignore this fact? <<

Yes.... Because of the "implied trust" I abide by. And, my fondness of wanting to continue earning a good living.

Why is it you find the need to use comparisons of the most heinous nature?

By the way, in Florida, possession of graphically explicit photos etc., is not illegal. It only becomes illegal if... its exhibited publicly.

- Ralph F. Mariano, Editor, Publisher
- STReport International Magazine
- SBN 3 - MSDN - 192535/RC0
- <http://www.streport.com> - rmariano@streport.com

IE4, When only.. The Very Finest Will Do!

From: Ralph F. Mariano [rmariano@streport.com]
Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 1998 7:30 AM
To: Stan Sieger
Subject: RE: Re your editorial

> -----Original Message-----
> From: Stan Sieger [mailto:sieger@hotmail.com]
> Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 1998 12:47 AM
> To: rmariano@streport.com
> Subject: RE: Re your editorial

> >By the way, in Florida, possession of graphically explicit photos etc., is not illegal. It only becomes illegal if... its exhibited publicly. Your editorial spoke of child pornography, didn't it? Mere possession of such is a felony under Federal statutes, isn't it? <<

Child Porn... is not illegal to have... it is illegal to make available to others or display.

As an updater;

The Florida State Attorney's Office has yet to charge this man with any wrongdoing. I personally know of three highly prominent Criminal Attorneys who have expressed interest in defending this person "Pro Bono".

I now know I am not alone in my convictions that the manner in which this guy was "set-up" and arrested is a serious violation of privacy laws, first amendment rulings and the bill of rights.

Please, think long and hard about the ramifications of a decision to prosecute. Forget the defendant and the immediate situations of this case. The precedent setting decisions in this situation will leave everyone (including you and I) subject to unmitigated, at will, search of their electronic data storage devices. The future is data storage of some sort or another. Must it be laid open for all to see at all times? This case could very possibly lay the groundwork for such things.

One Attorney I spoke with who is excellent in Family Law, Civil Law and Constitutional Law, said very quickly; "This is all new ground we are travelling on and as such cases formed now will set the pace for the future." he said. Then to go on he said further; "We must be very careful in laying the ground work or else in the immediate future the problems thus generated will be enormous."

There you have it Stan... I'll keep you posted as this matter develops... feel free to forward or share any of these related posts.

- Ralph F. Mariano, Editor, Publisher
- STReport International Magazine
- SBN 3 - MSDN - 192535/RC0
- <http://www.streport.com> - rmariano@streport.com

IE4, When only.. The Very Finest Will Do!

From: John O'Hare [john.ohare@cbis.com]
Sent: Monday, February 23, 1998 10:57 AM
To: rmariano@streport.com
Subject: Technicians responsibility regarding privacy

I don't think you can compare a computer technician to a doctor or a lawyer, who both go through years of training, take an oath as part of their job and are licensed in some way. I guess it would be nice if they did have similar job requirements, but then you'd be paying \$1000 just to get a hard drive installed.

A more fair comparison would be to compare a computer technician to an auto mechanic or a VCR repairman. If you take your car in to the shop and the mechanic happened to come across some child pornography, what would his responsibilities be? Would it make a difference if he found it under the seat? In the glovebox? How about the trunk? What if a VCR repairman finds a tape in a VCR brought in for service and the tape happened to contain child pornography? I'm not sure what the answers to these questions are myself. I would like to think that ones personal files on a PC are private and not subject to snooping when a PC is brought in for service. Personally, I would make sure all my private files were either removed or encrypted before I turned my PC over to someone for repair.

As for the technician in this case. Well, being against child pornography (as I'm sure most rational people are), I tend not to have a problem with what he did. I do not know however the details of the situation, which can make a big difference. Were there only 1 or 2 images? If so, maybe the person downloading them wasn't aware of what was being transferred. If there was a whole directory of these images, then that's another story. Also, did that image just really popup or did the technician have to dig to find it? Somehow I think it's somewhere in the middle. I doubt this PC user had child pornography in his logo.sys file, but I don't think the technician found it in his Netscape cache either.

So, I guess all I'm doing here is giving you a few more things to think about. I don't have all the facts and especially don't have all the answers either. I just don't think it's a simple enough case to say the technician was wrong and put his responsibilities on par with a doctor's or lawyer's. Let me know what you think.

Thanks!
John

John,

I thought I'd wait a day or two and answer you in the magazine.. As you can see above I've pretty well answered your missive. To bring you and our readers up to date.. As of today, 27, Feb 1998 the gent in question has yet to be charged by the State of Florida for any wrongdoing. While he was originally represented by a Public Defender, he now has retained a well known Attorney in Jacksonville, Florida.

Frankly speaking. I fervently hope this matter does go to trial as I can plainly see the entire issue of "how the internet operates" and "how files are automatically downloaded to a person's computer" when they merely view such files and then leave a such a site not knowing they have the files already residing on their computer. It scares me to dickens to think a computer tech or whatever can search and spot something on your hardisk when the unit is in for service.. Report you to a cop and then an overzealous local cop can then "set you up for a bust". This is BAD Law Enforcement.

How many computer users, novices and power users alike really know what's going on in their hard drive when they're accessing the Internet and the Nooks and Crannies one may find themselves in?? This sort of "police action" scare the bejeebers out of me. If this sort of thing is allowed to continue to happen, is this particular fashion, nobody. I mean NOBODY is safe! Why? Because if anyone visits a WebSite that is, at one point or another, tied into anything illegal, the data from that site can be found on their hard drive!! They too, are up for grabs.

What if. the computer tech is one of the religious zealots?? Finds something from a website you visited in one of the special browser directories that's against his religion? Abortion? Etc., Photos, Illicit pictures, or anything else that could be deemed illegal by any stretch of the imagination?? Buddy, you'll be in a world of hurt. This sort of non-sense will make it "Open Season" on folks who browse the web in its entirety. This action really amounts to RAW CENSORSHIP at its worst since it used a fear tactic.

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From: John O'Hare [john.ohare@cbis.com]
Sent: Monday, February 23, 1998 10:29 AM
To: rmariano@streport.com
Subject: Subscriptions

I'm not sure if I would be willing to pay for a subscription to streport...maybe some small amount, but definately not \$20. Most of the decent commercial magazines out there cost less than that for a subscription. For example, many of the ZD magazines are about \$15 per year for a subscription...and if you want you can still get most of their content for free via the web.

There are other issues you might want to thing of too...like would you have to pay people who contribute reviews? Do you copy any of your content (ie, news) from another source? If so, there might be problems if you charge for subscription. Also, since you're emailing streport out to everyone, it would be easy for people to pirate/distribute streport via email forwarding or even posting issues on usenet. Just some things to think about.

Not too sure about the end of year CD either...just doesn't seem like it would be that useful. I'd rather see the subscription be cheaper and forget about the CD.

-John-

John,

I'm inclined to agree with you. I'd love to see advertisers on the website and booster listings for our readers. Boosters at say, a buck a shot for a listing and the commercial adverts could be of any size from business card up to a full page. Perhaps this exchange will plant a few seeds and get the ball rolling. I can be reached at my Email address and at 904-292-9222 anytime between 9a and 5p est.

Thanks for reading STReport!

- Ralph F. Mariano, Editor, Publisher
- STReport International Magazine
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IE4, When only.. The Very Finest Will Do!

Classics & Gaming Section
Editor Dana P. Jacobson
dpj@streport.com

This has probably been one of the worst weeks I've experienced in quite some time. My real job has been one disaster after another and major projects going awry one-by-one this week.

Another "major" thorn in my side is that my online source for STReport's Industry News segment has been "broken" for over a week, hence the reduced segment last week and none this week. No replies to my numerous letters to the support gurus, which seems typical for those who are supposed to maintain feedback from its customers. It appears that "service" has rapidly evolved into another example of an oxymoron.

The week started off with a mishap with our "new" puppy, albeit a humorous one now that it's over. We've been taking him to "puppy kindergarten" (obedience, etc. training classes). It's rare that our pup isn't involved in something out of the ordinary at these classes! He's a Labrador Retriever, with pointer and hound blood in him. Beautiful dog, but ornery as can be - a typical dominant type of dog! Anyway, we're the first to arrive. Shortly after arriving, another pup arrives (a chocolate Lab) who has been there before and our pup gets along well. Usually the trainer lets the puppies run about free for the first few minutes to get used to the other dogs and to burn up some energy. So the two of them are running around having a great time.

Let me just take you back 4 days earlier. Our pup has free run of our yard since it's all fenced-in. That day, I get a call from my wife, upset. The pup's tail got cut somehow and bleeding. Nothing serious, the dog is in no pain. However, like a typical puppy, he wags his tail a great deal. Naturally, as he's wagging, he's "spraying" drops of blood everywhere! And, if his tail hits anything, he leaves blood marks behind. So my wife is trying to stop the bleeding while at the same time following him around cleaning up where she can. She finally penned him and the bleeding had stopped (it wasn't serious, but tails are one part of a dog that seem to bleed forever!).

During the next couple of days, the small cut starts to heal and there are no more problems. We take the dog to class...

So, back to the present. The two Labs are running around and a third puppy arrives, a small terrier. After a few classes together already, these three are good friends who like to run around and play. But that night, the small terrier must have seemed less playful than usual and soon wandered over to where the "parents" we standing - near some benches. Well naturally the two retrievers weren't going to let that stop them; they followed the terrier, playing and waggin' their tails with glee. Getting any ideas yet?

At one point, one of the owners points to the terrier (who is all white) and exclaims "Millie is bleeding!". Naturally, we all turn to look. There's blood on the back of the terrier's neck. Everyone's first reaction is that one of the Labs must have nipped the terrier a little too hard while playing. After careful inspection, there was no bite but there was blood. I started to feel uneasy. I grabbed my pup and sure enough, the end of his tail was wet - and bleeding. My wife and I are trying to control him and keep him from everyone. But he's happy, and playing. He's still trying to play; and of course, the tail is going a mile a minute! People are wiping up blood drops everywhere - floor, walls, their clothes,

and everywhere else. You couldn't really tell how splattered the people were since most of us were wearing blue jeans and other dark clothing. However, the trainer had on a bright yellow sweatsuit. Is your imagination going vivid now? She stood up straight after determining that the terrier was okay. I looked at her and looked for a hole to crawl into and hide. She looked as if someone had taken a paintbrush with red paint on it and smacked her legs with it, front and back! She was a sight! My wife and I were so embarrassed. There was nothing that we could do; and it wasn't anybody's fault. The pup must have been wagging his tail and hit it against something and re-injuring it, opening up the cut. There was no way we could stay for the class and we decided to leave before everyone else was "painted". There was nothing that we could say or do at that point. I wonder if we'll be allowed back next week?! <grin>

The happy ending to that escapade is we took the puppy to the vet as a precaution. It was late evening, so we had to pay for an emergency visit, but that was okay. The vet shaved the tip of his tail while three assistants held the pup steady - picture a 6-month-old labrador retriever that weighs 65 pounds! Nothing serious - a small cut on both sides of the tail. Did I mention that the tail started to bleed again as we entered the animal hospital? The cut didn't require stitches, but would have to stop bleeding and heal on its own. Bandages are useless as the dog would just chew them off. So, after being assured that nothing was serious, an envelope full of antibiotics (as a precaution), and \$65 less in my pocket, we drove home. What a night!

So, it's been a bad week all the way around. It's supposed to be a nice weekend, so I think I'll hang around outside and have a few beers! I've earned a quiet weekend for a change - especially after this past week!

Let's move from dog tales (or tails!) to Atari tales. We have a little bit this week after a drought the past few weeks.

Until next time...

From Mille Babic:

Hi!

If your e-mailer application can't automatically break long lines, then surf to: <http://user.tninet.se/~gcc561r/channel/lists/issue981.html>

POPwatch

POPwatch by Gary Priest is up to v2.50 A swedish RSC and docs made by me is also available.

Resources from previous versions *will not* work with this version. New Statistics Window shows how many emails have been sent, retrieved, rejected, and killed. Also shows size of HISTORY file by number of message-id entries.

Writing and checking of HISTORY file can be turned off within General Preferences.

When sending email's from NEWSie, the signature is now not prefixed with '---' See POPWATCH.TXT for more details.

No longer hangs when sending email from NEWSie and appending a signature file that doesn't end in CRLF. If no 'To:' field is found within the header of an incoming email, then POPwatch defaults 'postmaster' as the To:

address. In practice, this only benefits people who download email in the NOS format. In which case, the email is deposited in the postmaster mailbox. This will either be postmaster.txt or can be overridden by use of the 'alias' file.

Now automatically checks that you are using the correct version of resource file. This is mainly to ensure that people using the non-English resource files cannot use the wrong one by mistake.

If POPwatch tries to automatically check for new mail, but finds that it is already connected to the POP3 server, then it chimes the system bell as a warning because automatic checking can only occur when POPwatch is not connected to the POP3 server.

Verbose window now has an icon displayed when iconified. Also no longer loses the icon for the main iconified window, if the verbose window was previously iconified.

Now displays 'checking against history file' when downloading initial headers. You will find POPwatch at:

<http://user.tninet.se/~gcc561r/apps/index.html>

QED

Most of my webpages are handmade, by QED. There's an active QED download button in some of them, they point you to the official webpage by Christian Felsch. If you activate the button you will find the brand new QED v4 10 version.

Infitra

Infitra is the latest internet application of Merciful from the Netherlands and is the latest in 'state of the art' programs for the Atari and compatibles range of computers. It gives the user a fully featured and professional email tool until now only found on WINDOWS (c), UNIX, NOVELL (c) and APPLE (c) platforms. You can download the limited demo version from their website, click on the 'DEMO' button of the left menu to get it! The demo version will send your mail, but will have a fixed signature file attached to all mail you send. The signature file is a blunt advertisement for Infitra and cannot be switched off. The other limitations are that the program won't send attachments and won't list on server. Infitra is to be found at:

<http://www.worldaccess.nl/~koenrad9/index.htm>

NEWSie

As written in the previous message, NEWSie is up to v0.86.

My webpage Atari-related homepage: You can use the symbolic link:
<http://surf.to/atari>

My e-mail address is atari@ebox.tninet.se for Atari-related e-mails and mille@ebox.tninet.se for personal e-mails.

The atari@hem1.passagen.se in the header of this mail is 'course Emailer can't send mail through a Exim server, but you can use this address to reply with anyway (It's forwarded). You can also use atari@reborn.com

The exact location of the software download page is:

<http://user.tninet.se/~gcc561r/apps/>

and the ASH download page at:

<http://user.tninet.se/~gcc561r/ash/download.html> They contains swedish versions of CAB, Fiffi and Emailer with HTML docs.

A statement: My webpages is as always before, readable with browsers that *not* or have the frames support disabled. I always use the <NOFRAMES> tag in my index-files and always have. All pictures have the ALT 3D tag with info if someone disable or can't display pictures.

Best Regards

Mille Babic mailto:atari@ebox.tninet.se
WWW: <http://surf.to/atari>
Atari Falcon 40 MHz, 12MB RAM, 10GB+540MB HD
ASH MagiC 5 20, jinnee 1.0, CAB 2.6
ASH Fiffi 1 04 & Emailer 1.0

Is Usenet Choking on Spam?

ZDNet News (February 20, 1998) - Make tons of money sitting on your couch! See nude pictures of every conceivable type of person engaging in every conceivable type of sex act! And did we mention they're nude?

Wander the virtual discussion halls of Usenet these days, and that's the kind of advertising tainted conversation you're likely to hear. With messages on certain newsgroups consisting predominantly of spam, it's easy to get the feeling that what was a platform for vibrant, intense global conversation has turned into a giant infomercial for get-rich-quick schemes and pornography. Some observers and members of the Usenet community -- one of the oldest on the Internet -- decry what they fear will be the slow death of Usenet, noting that the massive proliferation of useless messages is making some users turn away from the medium.

But others point out that in spite of the drawbacks, the Usenet conversation, which literally comprises every imaginable topic, is far from over. As with e-mail, users have to tune out quite a bit of background noise to get to what they want to hear. And just as in other forms of public discourse, the denizens of Usenet are learning that freedom of speech comes with a price, some users maintain.

Rich Tietjens, a software technician who serves as a moderator for three newsgroups devoted to Atari computers and electric cars, said that lately between 85 and 90 percent of articles submitted by users for posting on his newsgroups are the Usenet equivalent of spam mail -- advertisements for bulk e-mail marketing products, pornographic Web sites, and the like. "It's definitely cutting down on the number of groups people follow," Tietjens said. In some cases, newsgroups that were once populated by dozens of regular users have dwindled to near-vacancy, partly in reaction to the spam onslaught, he said.

He posts only five to 10 new messages per day on his groups, he said. The alt.america.online newsgroup is a perfect example of the problem: Of 30 messages posted Thursday, just two pertained to the online service. The rest were solicitations for a variety of dubious-sounding products and services. One writer on the alt.culture.usenet newsgroup this week voiced frustration with a recent influx of obscene messages having nothing to do with the issues the group was formed to discuss.

"I think that the real purpose of Usenet is just to connect with people and to hear other views," he wrote. "That purpose is not too well known by all

these people who post ads for their porn sites." While at one time such postings were met with angry responses, "now everybody does it," he wrote. "It is a shame that such a good thing is lost." But other observers, such as Steve Atkins, moderator of two drama and theater newsgroups, said spam needs to be kept in perspective. The majority of newsgroups are home to serious and thought-provoking conversation, Atkins maintained. "I see virtually no spam on Usenet," he said. "One or two posts in a thousand, maybe." The groups he frequents employ a spam filtering technology called "Spam Hippo" to remove most unwanted messages, and the technology is widely available to newsgroup moderators, Atkins said.

"In the future, Usenet will continue evolving to remain useful," Atkins said. "Spam and other annoyances might be dealt with by technical solutions, social solutions, or a combination of the two." With non-spam messages posted to Usenet averaging 350,000 per day, most newsgroups "still provide their original function of being a place where like-minded people can gather to ask questions, provide answers, provoke discussions, trigger heated arguments, flirt, gossip, heckle, and fight," he said.

Unwanted messages provide a particular challenge to Deja News, the company that operates a Web site devoted to cataloguing the massive Usenet conversation. (On Deja News, which operates like a search engine, users can search for Usenet postings on any topic.) With spam messages on the rise, company officials are seeking ways to deliver only the most useful content to users.

"There's definitely been an uptick in the amount of spam out there," said David Wilson, VP of marketing for Deja News, in Austin, Texas. "The spammers may be unethical, but they're not dumb. They hit some of the most popular newsgroups because they know that's where the eyeballs are."

"Usenet can provide incredible value and utility to people, but it's very scattered," Wilson said. "There are so many points of access and so little control." While there's no way to completely block unwanted messages, the company's new artificial intelligence spam filters are blocking out about 90 percent of the offensive messages from Deja News search results, Wilson said.

And two weeks ago, the company rolled out a personalized product similar to those offered on other search engines. With My Deja News, users can get direct delivery of new messages of interest to them, he said.

Searching for that information is no small feat: Deja News' database holds more than 300GB of data, some 250 million archived messages, Wilson said. New messages are numbering 900,000 per day, with the pace of posting doubling each year. As its use increases, the challenge for newsgroup moderators, as well as for Deja News, is to make sure Usenet "doesn't spin out of control," he said.

Gaming Section

"Resident Evil 2"!!
Gaming U.!
"GEX: Enter the Gecko"!
And more!

CAPCOM: Resident Evil 2 -- The Shocks Begin

FEB 24, 1998, M2 Communications - Ahead of its scheduled spring launch in the UK, Capcom's Resident Evil 2 has shattered sales records in the US and Japan to become the most successful PlayStation game of all time. In Japan the games-buying public went crazy for the eagerly-anticipated sequel. On January 29th, the day of Resident Evil 2's release, retailers had to open up two hours early to appease the crowds that had gathered outside.

By the time the dust had settled on the first day, an incredible 1.8 million copies of the game had been sold. This makes Resident Evil 2 easily the fastest-selling PlayStation game ever launched in Japan. It has left other landmark titles standing: Final Fantasy VII took four months to hit the 1.8 million mark whilst Gran Turismo recently shifted 1.4 million units in its first month on sale.

In the US, meanwhile, 650,000 copies of Resident Evil 2 were sold in the first weekend of release. Again this is a new record for the territory. It pulled in revenues of over \$19 million in two days, out-performing all movies released in the US so far, with the exception of *Titanic*. The game will ship in the UK on April 29th and Virgin Interactive, Capcom's long-term distribution partner, is already preparing for another record-breaking ship-out, this time in excess of 250,000 in a single weekend, part of a pan-European roll-out of more than 800,000. Total global sales of Resident Evil 2 are expected to rapidly soar past the world-wide figure of four million achieved by the franchise since the release of the original in 1996.

Virgin Interactive's deputy managing director Sean Brennan comments: "Our relationship with Capcom has delivered some notable successes in the past few years, but Resident Evil 2 will take us into a different ball park. The incredible success achieved by the title in Japan and US has only increased pre-release expectations that were already massive. Make no mistake, we will deliver, with the biggest PlayStation hit ever seen, accompanied by a suitably immodest sales and marketing offensive that will leave retailers, rivals and consumers gasping."

Nintendo-Supported Institute Aims To Build Game Developers

Feb 19, 1998 (MULTIMEDIA WIRE, Vol. 5, No. 33) -- Talented game developers are made, not born, and too many go to Hollywood. Those appear to be the messages from the DigiPen Institute of Technology, which officially opened yesterday its four-year college program that will award Baccalaureate Degrees of Science in game development. The program will focus on computer animation and video game programming while emphasizing real-time interactive simulations. DigiPen plans to grow its enrollment to 100 students for fall 1998.

Nintendo, Washington Gov. Gary Locke (D) and several industry watchers support the move. The Institute is located in Redmond, Washington. This is "nothing more than a human resources [move] from a forward-looking company," Fairfield Research analyst Gary Gabelhouse says approvingly, believing that Microsoft's [MSFT] presence has made it hard for Nintendo to find skilled programmers in the Seattle area.

It is "a real challenge" to get into DigiPen. It looks like a good farm for potential Nintendo developers, says DFC Intelligence analyst David Cole, citing a similar degree program in New Brunswick, Canada. There's a lot of money to be made by programmers in the video game industry now, he adds.

It isn't clear if graduation ceremonies will include a rendition of the regal Pomp and Circumstance or theme-music from the NES version of Zelda.

DigiPen Opens First Video Game University

REDMOND, WASHINGTON, U.S.A., 1998 FEB 23 (Newsbytes) -- By Sami Menefee, Newsbytes. DigiPen Institute of Technology has developed a highly focused curriculum for game-loving students who have an aptitude for dreaming up new games. As computers become more complex, so do gamer expectations, and DigiPen figures the ranks of gamers will provide the best new designer candidates. The new fully accredited game designing school actually enrolled its first 40 students last month.

They can opt to receive a degree either as Associate of Science (AS), a two-year program, or Bachelor of Science (BS), a four-year program. Their diploma will read "Real Time Interactive Simulation in the World" when they pick it up at the end of the term. Jason Chu, registrar for DigiPen, told Newsbytes: "This fall we will add more students in the same program and next September, 1999, we will start a Bachelor of Arts (BA) program that will focus on the artistic and marketing arm of the games industry."

He added: "We plan to add Master's and PhD degrees in the next two to three years. "We have been teaching three-dimensional (3-D) computer graphics for several years now at our Canadian facility. Now video games use more 3-D, so there is a lot of need for 3-D graphics and we need graphics artists to create the 3-D images." He added: "The BA degree gives students who want to specialize in game creation, but not the programming of them, somewhere to focus their artistic talents," said Chu.

He said that each student must create, design, and implement a game to move to the next semester, with the games increasing in complexity from simple puzzles to 3-D network games that can run across different platforms. "Each level of difficulty will require different skills," said Chu. Once all programs are in place, students will choose Science or Arts for their degree, but will be able to take classes from each area, he said. All students will get a deep grounding in the appropriate areas for their specialties, including video-game programming, data structure and algorithms, image-processing, math, physics, marketing, fine arts and, of course, mythology.

DigiPen Tech is a Washington state-accredited private school located at Nintendo of America's corporate headquarters. The giant gaming firm rents classroom and lab space to the school and gives technical support and curriculum guidance as needed. "We are in a 120,000 square foot facility and are only using 14,000 for our giant lab where the students work," commented Chu. "We plan to keep the ratio of student to teacher at ten to one, so as the student population grows, we will hire more teachers," said Chu. Chu said the school has run a two-year program in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada since 1994 and has graduated 44 students. He said the school had two reasons to move south -- about 80 percent of their students were from the US and school officials wanted "to be closer to Nintendo." The plan, according to school officials, is to keep enrollments small, adding about 100 students each year. Tuition runs \$300 per unit. A BS degree requires 160 units to complete. An AS degree can be completed with 80 units, said Chu. DigiPen Institute of Technology has a site on the World Wide Web at <http://www.digipen.edu>

Midway Home Entertainment Announces Retail Availability of 'GEX'

CORSICANA, TEXAS (Feb. 24) BUSINESS WIRE - Feb. 24, 1998 - The TV-addicted

wise-cracking Gecko is back! Midway Home Entertainment Inc. announced today the retail availability of GEX: Enter the Gecko(TM) for the PlayStation(R). Developed by Crystal Dynamics and distributed by Midway Home Entertainment, GEX: Enter the Gecko is now available wherever video games are sold. The announcement was made by Paula Cook, director of Marketing for Midway Home Entertainment. Utilizing the very latest in 3D gaming technology, GEX: Enter the Gecko is the hilarious, action-packed sequel to the popular PlayStation video game, GEX. Cited by the media as one of the top titles introduced at the 1997 Electronic Entertainment Expo, GEX: Enter the Gecko is considered one of the hottest properties on the gaming horizon today.

GEX: Enter the Gecko for the PlayStation features GEX, the hilarious, TV-addicted, tail-snapping, gravity-defying, wise-cracking gecko. Gamers get to join the mercilessly madcap mission as GEX, video gaming's most irreverent gecko, is reluctantly recruited by a secret government agency to keep his arch rival, Rez, from taking over the country's cable TV industry! GEX must make his way through more than fifteen levels designed as sarcastic parodies of popular television and movies. Full of tongue-in-cheek references to pop culture and American media, GEX: Enter the Gecko artfully combines humor, stunning graphics and challenging gameplay for an unparalleled video gaming experience.

GEX: Enter the Gecko is packed with over 125 unique moves, 3,400 frames of fluid character animation and additionally enhanced by "turn and talk" lip-synching. Sporting shades - he's a wild Secret Agent and Master of Disguises - GEX is a totally original video game character. GEX's unforgettable, trademark personality was achieved through the skill of the talented co-star of the NBC comedy "Working" and HBO comedian Dana Gould, who provides GEX with a voice and personality incorporating over 500 right-on celebrity impressions and hysterically sharp-witted one-liners. No pre-rendered cut scenes mar GEX: Enter the Gecko, a superb production expressing the finest in video game character design and application.

Along the way, all new 360 degree free-roaming 3D game play allows GEX to explore vast, brilliantly detailed 3D levels, while providing gamers the unique feeling of total control. Command GEX to go where YOU want him to go...have him scale a mountain or traverse the entire length of a starship for video game action of a lifetime! GEX: Enter the Gecko gives you TOTAL control in TOTAL 3D! And control is what you'll need to match mind and muscle in this explosive, killer gecko action... whip-cracking tail attacks, suction cup paws, flying karate kicks, tongue lashing and environmental secrets that unlock hidden areas.

According to Cook, "We are thrilled to bring GEX: Enter the Gecko for the PlayStation. Within this groundbreaking video game, Crystal Dynamics has incorporated the most phenomenally advanced 3D engine yet, assuring its place in video game history." Rated K-A (Kids to Adults) by ESRB, GEX: Enter the Gecko will also be released for gameplay on the Nintendo 64 later this year.

ONLINE WEEKLY STReport OnLine

The wires are a hummin'!

PEOPLE... ARE TALKING

Compiled by Joe Mirando
jmirando@streport.com

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. It's another beautiful day in my neighborhood. The temperature today was in the low 50's, and we're supposed to get more of the same right through the weekend. While I and those around me are enjoying the unusual weather (50 degrees in Connecticut in February is quite unusual to say the least), we know that there will probably be a price to be paid in the near future.

As for all this talk of el nino goes (please excuse my lack of special characters, but I figured that everyone would know what I was talking about), there are still some folks in the scientific community that are intent on hashing out exactly what is and what is not caused by 'the baby'. This troubles me for one reason... While everyone is involved in the debate, there is less effort going into discovering exactly what causes this mid-pacific phenomenon and we can do to to, if not stop it, then at least forecast it.

And as if all the trouble caused by el nino isn't bad enough, there will be another event known as 'la nina', el nino's sister, so to speak. La nina is sort of the pendulum swinging the other way. El nino provides warmer than normal water over a patch of ocean roughly as wide as the United States. La nina will be exactly the opposite... a huge patch of colder water. How this will effect global weather patterns is still being debated, but I think we can safely say that it WILL effect them.

All of this talk puts me in mind of something that Mark Twain once said: "Everyone talks about the weather, but no one ever DOES anything about it". As true now as it was a hundred years ago. What does any of this have to do with Atari computers?? Absolutely nothing... isn't it wonderful? <Grin>

Well, last week we sat in with the folks on Delphi, so this week we'll take a look at that part of the internet known as the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup

On the subject of using your ST on the internet, Keith Lever asks for help with a problem:

"I have recently signed up with Zetnet and can now wonder the WEB with my Atari. I have had few problems with CAB so far, except that if I ever try to access a search engine such as Altavista, Yahoo etc, CAB crashes and dies.

Does this only happen on search engine pages, or on any other web pages as well?"

George Crissman tells Keith:

"If you're looking for a thorough list of search engines to test with CAB, allow me to recommend:
<http://www.tmisnet.com/~strads/search/index.html>"

Not really an answer to the question, but a nice tidbit of information nonetheless. Meanwhile, Dan Ackerman, author of the CAB overlay file that joins CAB to either STik or STinG, tells us all:

"I found a problem with Altavista, if you want to try the beta of the next cab.ovl for stik/sting with a fix for this grab it from <http://www.netset.com/~baldrick/cov12900.zip>.

I make no guarantees that this won't break some other bit of the OVL as I've only had it available to the beta testers for

around 7 hours now. The only other note is there are next to no docs with it. So play at your own risk."

John Whalley tells Keith:

"One possible cause of the problem: CAB doesn't seem to be able to handle long URLs (even if the OVL can). If you're using a search engine and refine the search etc (so the URL gets longer with all the additional search strings etc), sooner or later it dies. Old versions used to just crash, 2.5d (latest English version, AFAIK) suddenly starts writing all over the screen with the system font magnified dramatically, then it crashes!"

Anyone know if later versions (eg 2.6, 2.7) do this too?"

The author of CAB, Alexander Clauss jumps in and posts:

"This happens only because CAB writes the URL into info line of the window. Unfortunately the AES (of MagiC) does not allow such long texts. But instead of truncating the text it does overwrite some internal structures. This is why you'll see these big fonts. Now CAB truncates the text itself. In my humble opinion, this is a bug in MagiC."

Ah ha. I was wondering why I've never seen this happen on my TT with Geneva and NeoDesk. I'm sure that Geneva has its own little problems, so let's not get into a discussion about whether Geneva or MagiC is the better operating system.

Meanwhile, Brian Van Tilborg posts this about the CAB/MagiC/Search Engine problem:

"I don't have this happen off the bat. It will happen after a number of searches in a row. I have learned to follow the upper header on the URLs and you can pretty much predict when you can be in trouble:-). However you should be able to do a search for certain.

I was somewhat ticked by this however I have been using Internet Explorer at the library and it crashed 5 times in 2.5 hours while doing searches. At which point I realized I have fewer problems with Cab 1.5 <smile>"

Since we're on the subject of the internet, Ronald Hall asks about the possibility of adding telnet capability to his BBS. Peter Rottengatter, the author of STinG, asks Ron:

"What's been requested ? A Telnet client? Or a Telnet server? Or the possibility to log into your BBS via Telnet?"

Ron tells Peter:

"Well, since I live Stateside, a lot of users (even long distance in the US) have asked if they can logon via Telnet. Is this something that is possible? I'm willing to invest time and/or money in upgrading my current hardware/software and adding another phone line if necessary...Please let me know what I need to do, if you can and thanks again!"

Peter tells Ron:

"It mainly depends on HOW you want it. If the telnet is supposed to look and feel like the BBS over phone, there is no way apart from coding the telnet server INTO the BBS binary (the program you launch to start up the BBS).

I have a Telnet server in the works, it's on low priority ATM however. If you install that server, and have a permanent Internet connection, people can log in at any time across the Internet. They'll get a command prompt after login, and they can execute commands, which you provide by placing the corresponding binaries into certain directories. This way you can easily build a telnet based command prompt environment for your BBS."

Since we touched on Magic a while back, let's take a look at a question from Magnus Kollberg about using boot programs with Magic:

"Does Magic only execute those files found autoexec.bat and ignore all other programs even if they are executable e.g. have the extension *.PRG?"

Frank Perrey tells Magnus:

"Yes, until the next coldboot. If you are talking about the AUTO-folder. START-folder APP/PRGs will be executed as normal. Funny gimmick, I first didn't see its value but it really fine kicking AUTO off its throne:-)

I found out another good tool to configure boot processes still remains Xboot: if you write f.e. 'bad.prg' into your AUTOEXEC.BAT and Xboot changes it into 'bad.prx' it won't be booted under Magic as well, just because 'bad.prg' is not found...(ease way to test programs that could hang up system and kick'em out before they could do it again)

And you can give Magic pathways other than AUTO to find its autoprogams, I've got one AUTOMAGX folder with programs never needed under TOS or Mint/N-AES

All I didn't like in the end is its NAME, I patched it in my personal Magic.RAM to 'AUTOMAGX.BAT'."

"The Canadian Curmudgeon" asks about the state of the art of Atari emulators:

"Does anyone know what the currently available 'Atari Emulators' for use on the Apple platform are ?

If so - will they run on the new 'GE' series of Apple 'Power PC' products - reputedly 'optimised for Mac OS' - and are they happy with OS 8 ?"

Mike Freeman answers the question WITH a question:

"Have you tried the MagicMac Demo available from either the ASH website, or Toad's Atari Central website? I know MagicMac is rather expensive, but it's VERY fast, and should work on PPC and OS8, as far as I know. Download it and give it a try! Otherwise, I've heard of one newer emulator, but I don't know how good it is, and what it will run on."

Nicholas Bales adds:

"There's also NoSTalgia, which is PowerPC only. Not sure if it runs on a GE system. A Web search could find it."

Daniel Dreibelis tells the curmudgeon:

"I know that the latest version of MagicMac is OS-8 compatible; you could get in touch with Systems Solutions or

with Computer Direct."

Neil Orton asks about a CD Rom drive for his Falcon:

"Can anyone tell me if there is any driver software around for an IDE CDROM to combine with HD Driver 7's ability to control 2 IDE devices?

Also, as I already have the CDROM drive(PC surplus), would the Falcon PSU be able to power the CDROM via a power splitter cable from the internal HD power line?

If these are dumb questions (I've got thousands of 'em!) please forgive my ignorance if not, thanks in advance for any advice."

John Kolak tells Neil:

"The internal HD gets its power from the IDE cable. I don't see any way to get a splitter in unless you use a custom splitter off the main power supply cable. Not sure if the CD ROM would be too much of a drain, but it seems like a lot to ask of the Atari power supply. I remember all the problems with the drain the PC Ditto II caused on the power supply."

Dr. Uwe Seimet, the author of HDDriver, tells Neil:

"The fact that HDDRIVER supports two IDE/EIDE devices (master and slave) has no influence at all on the choice of an IDE CDROM driver. You simply need a CDROM driver that supports your CDROM. HDDRIVER is not involved in this at all."

Rolf Anders asks a question that many of us who are hanging onto our Atari computers will be asking in the future:

"I wonder where it's possible to get a new mouse (or trackball) for my mega STe. I saw one at www.ataricentral.com named "Beetle Mouse", but how can I order it?"

Mike Freeman tells Rolf:

"I don't know how much Atari stock Toad still has, but you can e-mail them at info@toad.net about the Beetle Mouse. Otherwise, pretty much any Atari dealer should be able to sell you or order you a mouse. I know Systems For Tomorrow has some different styles, too. Go to <http://www.SystemsForTomorrow.com/> to see what they have and/or get one of their catalogs."

Hallvard Tangeraas tells Rolf:

"Order one from System Solutions in the UK!!! I bought one from them, and it works great (a LOT better than the "brick" that comes from Atari themselves).

I forgot how much I paid for it, but it wasn't too bad. You'll find all the information, email addresses etc. on their web page: <http://www.system-solutions.co.uk/cafe/>

(I think there's a picture of it as well -it looks pretty nice and modern). I don't know anything about the "Beetle mouse".... perhaps someone else does."

Greg Evans adds his experiences:

"I've got a Beetle Mouse and love it! Very comfortable and

comes in an assortment of styles too -- mine is a lady bug complete with red body and black dots! Cute! It's quite fast also and you'll never go back to an Atari mouse."

Well folks, that's about it for this time around. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

EDITORIAL QUICKIES

Food for Thought.

Has McCarthy been Reincarnated in the form of.

Kenneth Starr??

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